

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name MILLER, Samuel, Houseother names/site number Virginia Department of Historic Resources File Number 118-223

2. Location

street & number 1433 Nelson Drivecity, town Lynchburgstate Virginia code VA county Lynchburg code 680 zip code 24502

(Independent City)

N/A
N/A☐ not for publication☐ vicinity

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2
0
0
0
2

Noncontributing

3
0
0
0
3
buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR P M 80.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

30 Sept 92In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register, ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ Other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE; BRICK

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof METAL: Tin

other BRICK

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ECONOMICS

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

c. 1826-1869

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

MILLER, Samuel

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
221 Governor Street, Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3.9 acres

UTM References

A 17 658230 4136750
Zone Easting Northing

C

B
Zone Easting Northing

D

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries of the nominated 3.86-acre property are delineated on the last recorded plat, contained in Campbell County Virginia Deed Book 344, page 253. A copy is appended in Section 10.

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary circumscribes the main residence and remaining dependencies which retain historic integrity. The extensive acreage of the original estate, which was subdivided and developed into a residential neighborhood during the mid-twentieth century, has been excluded.

☒ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barry Armond Rudacille & Judith Ann Crowder Rudacille

organization N/A date June 26, 1992

street & number 800 DeLafayette Court telephone Office: (804) 445-5581

city or town Virginia Beach state VA zip code 23455

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The focus of this nomination centers on Samuel Miller, the historic personage and resident of a large but unostentatious two-story frame house erected between 1826 and 1829, where he lived until his death in 1869. The physical integrity of the original expansive landholdings vanished long ago due to suburban development on the outskirts of Lynchburg. As for the nearly four acres that now embrace the house, the property still commands a view of the distant Blue Ridge Mountains to the west. Large English boxwoods frame one side of the domicile and part of the driveway, and a variety of very large trees, mostly oaks, are interspersed throughout the extensive areas of lawn. The historical integrity of the main residence is essentially intact, despite some twentieth century alterations. During the period of significance, there doubtless were a variety of outbuildings, but only one dependency remains from that era. A cottage located nearby may even slightly predate the main house, but that cannot be confirmed. In any event, this structure is a contributing resource that likely served as lodging for Samuel Miller's overseer, who was known to reside in a small dwelling near the main house.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Research is inconclusive with respect to the specific year that the main house was constructed. Samuel Miller's initial land purchase in this part of Campbell County (annexed by the City of Lynchburg in 1976) was made on December 23, 1825, when for the sum of \$4,000 he acquired 430.5 acres from Samuel Garland. Over the next thirty years, he systematically expanded this landholding in increments of ten to one-hundred acres, eventually amassing a total of about 1,500 acres. The deed for the initial purchase made reference to the tract or parcel "with the tenements", thereby suggesting that dwellings or other structures were on the property when purchased. The aforementioned cottage may have been among such buildings.

Only months earlier, on June 8, 1825, Samuel Garland had purchased this same tract (430.5 acres) at auction from James Martin, trustee for the heirs of Thomas Jones, for a bid of \$3,125.43. That deed likewise made no mention of any substantial improvement to the property, such as a large two-story dwelling. In the absence of clear documentation, it is surmised that the 1825 land purchases by both Samuel Garland and Samuel Miller included some small dwellings and outbuildings, perhaps of Quaker origin, but that the main house did not exist at that time. When Samuel Miller's health began to deteriorate in 1829 (at age 37), he retired to this property, which was then about five miles beyond the outskirts of Lynchburg. Accordingly, it is probable that the main house was built, at his expense, between 1826 and 1829.

A written account, *Lynchburg and Its Neighbors* (see bibliography), yields a brief description of the house, noting that the structure was "unpretentious but a substantial and comfortable dwelling". Devoid of adornment, it was said to have a few luxurious appointments, such as marble fireplace mantelpieces. While these were replaced by wood mantels in later years, one of the original white marble versions, with a carved monogrammed "M", is on display at the Miller Home of Lynchburg for Girls. Another feature cited was the presence of a sun parlor on the second floor, where Samuel Miller spent most of his time. This was considered an unusual house addition during that period (at least in the region) and contributed to local gossip of his eccentricities.

The house was two and one-half stories in height, forming a T-shaped floor plan, with two adjoining gabled roofs and featuring three third-floor dormers, clapboard siding, and three brick chimneys (six fireplaces originally), all resting on a fieldstone and mortar foundation. A detached kitchen was erected about ten feet to the west. It later was attached to the house by a small frame hyphen.

The most revealing portrayal of how the northwest front appeared in the early twentieth century is seen in a 1921 photograph owned by the Miller Home of Lynchburg for Girls. An attached copy of this print is compared

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to a pair of 1991 photographs taken from the same camera angle (see photographs 1, 2 & 3). As can be seen in the early photo, an expansive porch, featuring six Tuscan columns, extended the full width of the house at ground level, with a small balcony above. Since it is likely that the entire facade was an early twentieth century addition, its configuration provides no clues to an earlier reference that a sun parlor existed on the second floor during the period of significance. As for the nearby kitchen, it did not appear to have been connected to the main house in the 1921 photograph.

In regard to the original interior plan, the first floor contained three spacious rooms (probable parlor, library, and dining room), interconnected by a large foyer and hallway linking the three exterior entrances. Each room contained a fireplace. A simple staircase led to the second level, where there were three bedrooms, each with a fireplace, and a narrow corner staircase led to a small garret room on the third level. Two of the third-floor dormers and two small windows beneath the southeast gable provided light and ventilation for this small bedroom, which probably served as quarters for a servant who could be summoned readily to the nursing needs of Mr. Miller. The third dormer (seen on the northwest front) extended from an unfinished attic. As for the interior, all floors were comprised of wide pine boards; the walls and ceilings were of plaster and lath construction; crown, chair rail, and baseboard moldings were free of ornamentation. Interior kitchen walls were paneled with horizontal wide pine boards ranging 7-11 inches in width, and ceiling joists (3x9 inches) were exposed. The appended sketch is an estimate of the original floor plan.

The porch on the northeast facade probably served as the main entrance. It not only was on the side of the house closest to the turnpike, but also its door, framed with a transom and sidelights, added formality and illumination to what otherwise would have been a dark foyer.

While there is no discernible sign of an original cellar due to twentieth century alterations, one may have existed during the period of significance. In any event, Samuel Miller is known to have complained that Union troops ransacked his house "from cellar to garret".

Practically nothing is known about modifications to the house until 1937, when the property was purchased by Mr. & Mrs. Leigh Ballenberg, who immediately began a renovation to make the place more habitable. Original 1938 blueprints by the Lynchburg architectural firm of J. Everette Fauber, Jr. are in the possession of the current owner. The resultant modifications, as reflected by these blueprints, depict basically how the house appears today. Because of the need to install indoor plumbing, including radiators and a central furnace as well as insulation and electric wiring, the house was partially dismantled. The following alterations were made:

: A long narrow cellar with concrete floor and cinderblock walls was constructed along the northwest front, beneath the area where the spacious porch had been. This may have been an expansion of an earlier cellar but resulted in a furnace room for the oil heating unit, and the new basement was accessible only by concrete stairs external to the house. In need of a flue, the chimney on the southwest front was modified to accommodate the heating system. This rendered the fireplaces in the dining room and the above bedroom no longer functional. Accordingly, they were sealed over and the mantelpieces removed.

: The northwest front of the house underwent further transformation, as noted earlier in the 1921 and 1991 photograph comparisons. The downstairs parlor and dining room were extended several feet, and this expansion additionally made space available for a cloak closet, a linen closet, and a small lavatory. The latter additions effectively replaced the front porch seen in the 1921 photograph.

: Upstairs, the northwest front balcony was eliminated, and the adjoining bedroom was extended forward, flush with the new first-floor extension. A large master bathroom was introduced, which interconnected the two bedrooms on that side of the house. Another bathroom also was added to the second floor.

: A smaller porch was extended from the new northwest facade, and the new balcony was made accessible by a door leading from the master bath. According to blueprint annotations, the original porch columns,

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pilasters and railings were to be reused in constructing the new porch and in replacing deteriorated portions of the side porch. It should be noted that the blueprints offer very little insight as to how the house appeared before the 1938 remodeling, but when used in combination with the 1921 photograph, several conclusions can be drawn with respect to the alterations of the northwest front.

: The detached kitchen was connected with the dining room of the main house via a butler's pantry, and the original dimensions of the smaller structure were expanded somewhat. A modern kitchen and laundry room were introduced on the southwest side, relegating the original kitchen to use as a den. A small lavatory was included, and a porch extension with simple columns and arches completed the modifications.

: Blueprint annotations identified windows that were to be replaced. Those salvaged and still intact are readily detectable by the wavy imperfections of the glass panes.

: While modern locks were added to exterior doors, all original early nineteenth century locks (with large iron keys) remain intact on both interior and exterior doors.

Two significant modifications were made in the 1950s by later owners, Mr. & Mrs. W. N. Nelson II.

: A sun room, with ceramic tile floor (over a probable concrete slab) was extended from the southwest corner of the house, with entry gained via French doors leading from the library and the dining room. This resulted in a large exterior door becoming an interior door and thereby creating another entrance into the sun room (from the foyer).

: A nuclear fallout shelter was hand-excavated beneath the center hall and dining room by penetrating the furnace room wall. Access was gained from the first floor via a descending staircase under the original staircase. A lavatory was included, requiring a sump pump, since the drains are below grade.

Today, there are four outbuildings on the property. While Samuel Miller had as many as seventeen slaves (all believed to have been emancipated before the war, with several remaining as hired servants), their living quarters are lost to history. As a working farm for many decades, there doubtless were barns, stables and such other structures necessary to support a rural household of this size and population. Even in recent decades, there were records of poultry farming, and a large peach packing shed once stood nearby. Current structures include a small cottage (contributing resource) and three noncontributing resources (stable, woodshed and garage).

: The quaint little cottage located about fifty yards west of the main house probably is early nineteenth century vintage. Although plumbing and electricity were introduced at some point in its history, previous owners allowed it to deteriorate and relegated it to use as a storage shed. When the property was purchased by Mr. & Mrs. H. L. Rudacille in 1963, the cottage was made habitable and rented (single occupancy); the current tenant has resided there for the past fifteen years. As noted earlier, this dwelling may have been on the property when purchased by Samuel Miller in 1825. The frame construction, fieldstone foundation, narrow corner staircase, and finished garret room certainly suggest construction during the early nineteenth century, but alterations prohibit a conclusive determination of its age. As a dependency during the period of significance, it likely served as the domicile of Samuel Miller's overseer.

: The single-stall stable located seventy-five yards south of the main house probably was built in the early twentieth century. This noncontributing resource is frame construction and crudely assembled, with ceiling joists comprised of small unpeeled logs. Resting on a fieldstone foundation, a raised platform of well-worn, wide pine floorboards overlooks the dirt floor of the stall.

: A rustic woodshed is located a few feet west of the cottage. As another noncontributing resource, this probable early twentieth century structure has wide vertical plank siding, a dirt floor, and a crudely carved wooden latch.

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: A mid-twentieth century two-car garage of frame construction, adjacent to the stable, completes the inventory of noncontributing resources.

CONCLUSION

A mid-nineteenth century photograph of the house, or even a field sketch by combat artist David H. Strother (Porte Crayon), the latter having accompanied General Hunter's staff during the Lynchburg campaign, would be invaluable, as there are scant records available upon which to base an architectural description during the period of significance. Regardless, the known structural modifications and cosmetic changes of the twentieth century do not measurably detract from what was once, and still remains, an unpretentious but comfortable home. As for the extent of its architectural and historical integrity, the original structure is probably 90% intact. While several minor additions have been made, little of consequence has been removed.

ADDENDA

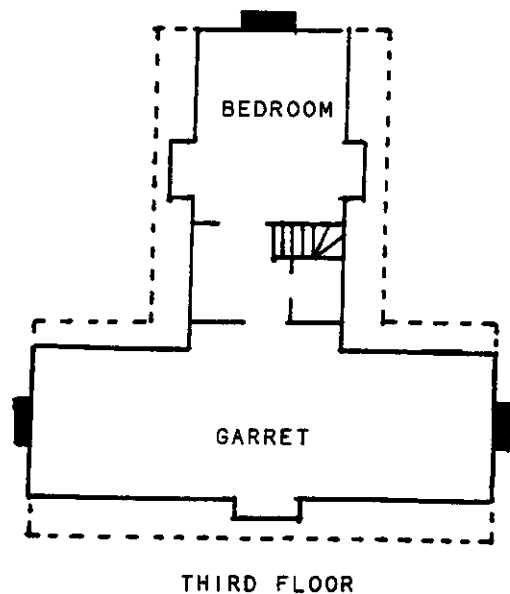
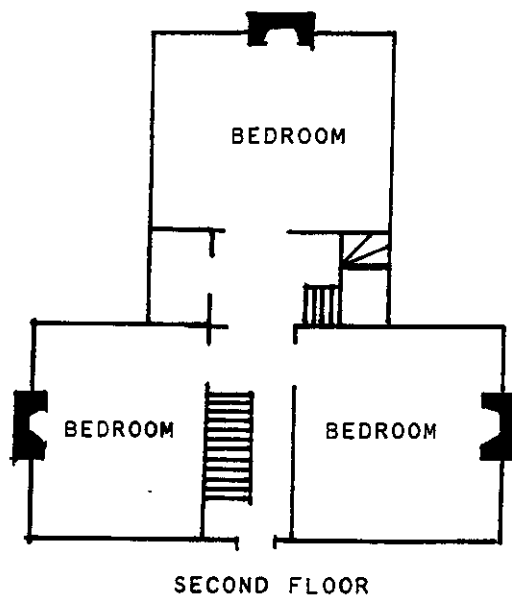
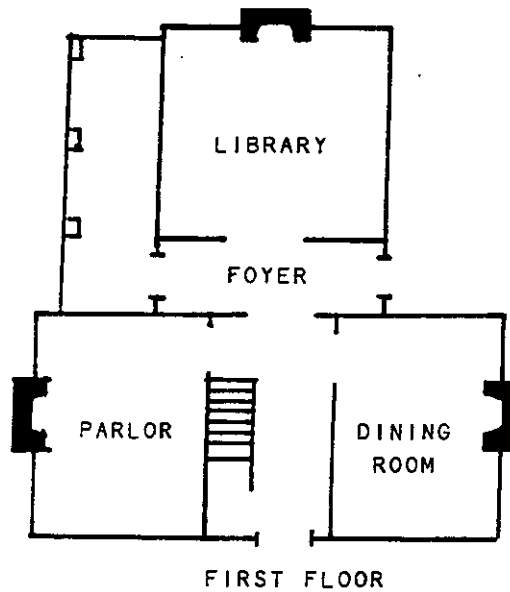
- : Estimated Original Floor Plan (c.1826)
- : Current Floor Plan (1992)

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MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
ESTIMATED ORIGINAL FLOOR PLAN (c. 1826)

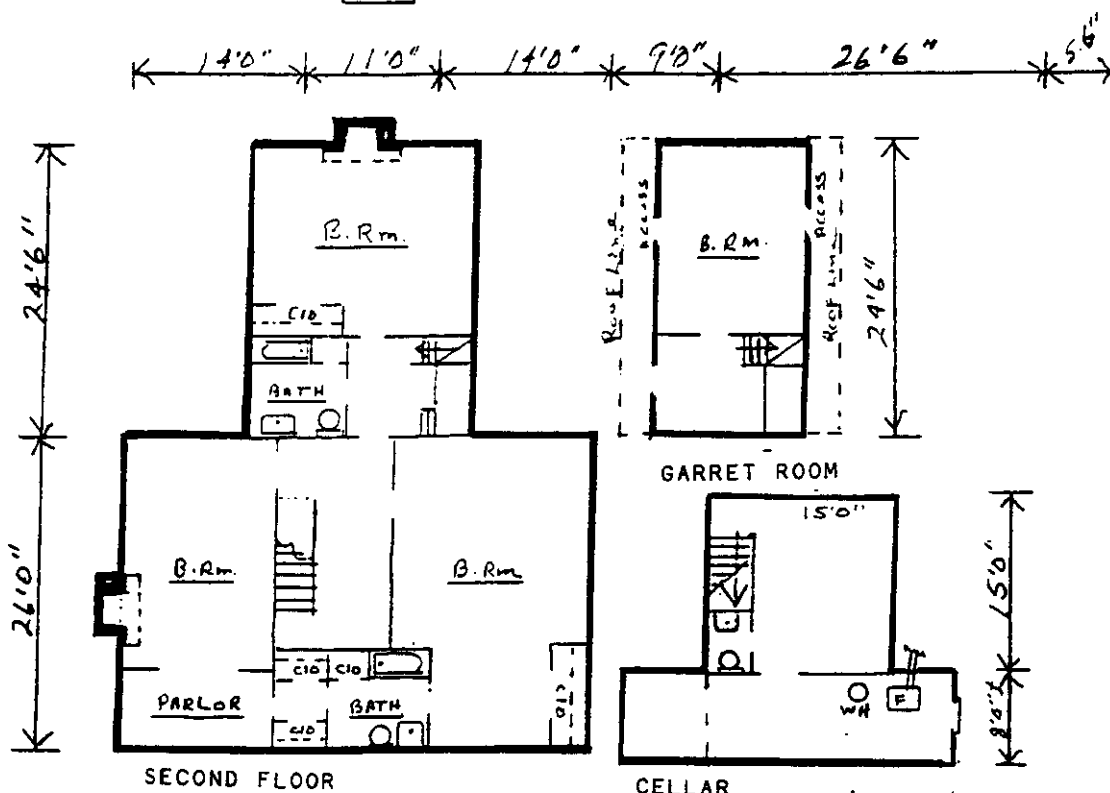
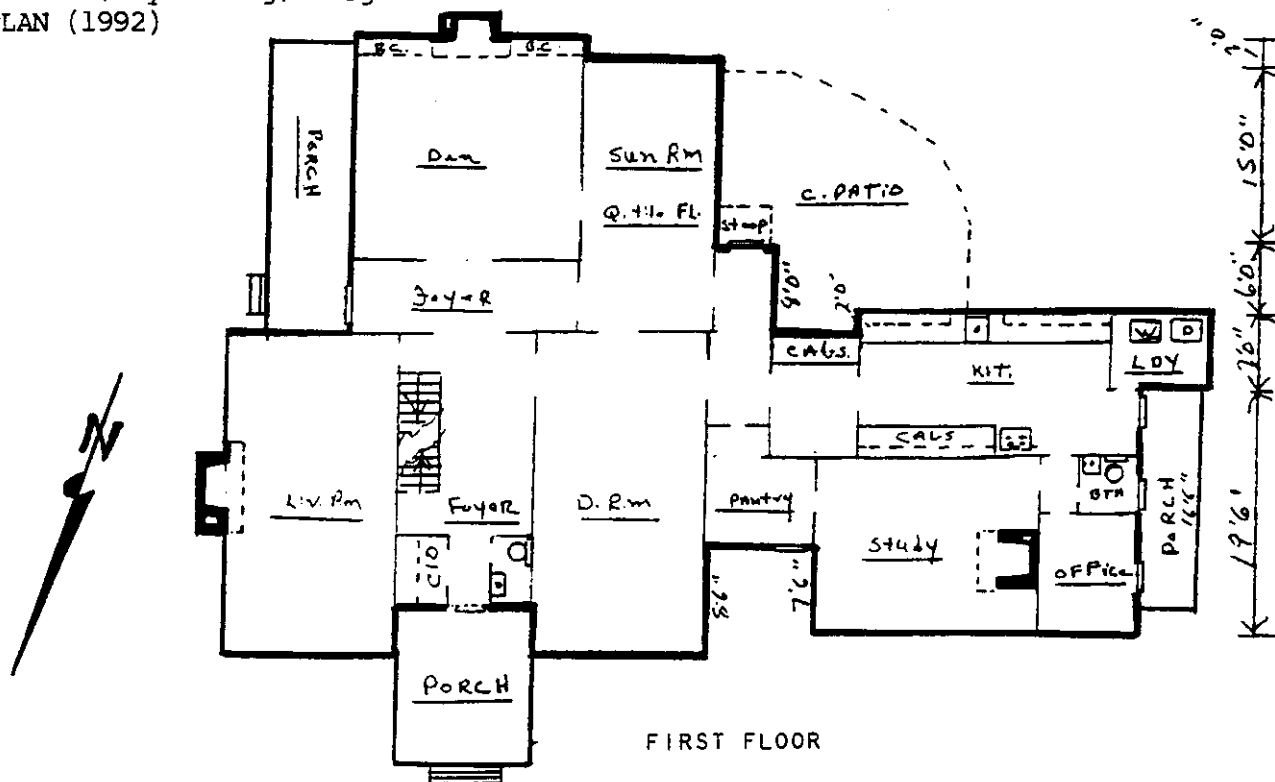


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MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
CURRENT FLOOR PLAN (1992)



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Samuel Miller House, located in Lynchburg, is significant for its association with Samuel Miller (1792-1869), who emerged from poverty to become a successful businessman and investor. The diversity and scope of his financial assets placed him among the wealthiest men in the South during the years preceding the Civil War. A philanthropist, he bestowed most of his considerable fortune on public, educational, and social causes within Virginia. The nominated property, where he lived in reclusion during the last forty years of his life, is a large frame house erected in the early nineteenth century and which served as his residence during the period of significance (c.1826-1869). Finally, this landscape was contested terrain during the siege of Lynchburg (June 1864), when a cavalry skirmish occurred on the property. Alerted to the wealth of the resident, Union troops ransacked the entire farm, encountering an elderly but defiant Samuel Miller. Having already sustained substantial investment losses attributed to the war, he took the precaution of concealing most of his financial papers, thereby preserving for future generations the provisions of his last will and testament. As for the selected areas of significance, economics was chosen due to the diversity of Samuel Miller's investments and his resultant accumulation of wealth. Social history also is relevant, in consideration of the final disposition of his wealth and his promotion of a social agenda through endowments.

ORIGINS & SUCCESSES

Samuel Miller's exact date of birth (believed to be June 30) in 1792 is unconfirmed. Born in the mountains near Batesville in Albemarle County, fatherless as a child and reared in abject poverty by his mother, Jane Miller, he and his older brother and only sibling (John) experienced severe privation. Both are believed to have received only a rudimentary education. As young adults, the two brothers moved to Lynchburg, gaining employment in what was then a boom town with a growing economy based on the marketing and transshipment of tobacco down the James River. By virtue of hard work and frugal lifestyles, they each became respectable businessmen and prospered as tobacco and grocery merchants during the very early years of Lynchburg's settlement and economic development.

Upon the death of John Miller in 1841 (at age 51), Samuel Miller became the sole heir and beneficiary of a \$100,000 inheritance from his brother. By then, his own cornering of the tobacco export market to England had made him a wealthy man in his own right, and years earlier, he had retired to his residence on the outskirts of the city due to poor health. It is probable that the early 1840s marked the period when he began to channel substantial amounts of his business profits and his inheritance into an assortment of high-yield investments, particularly railroad stocks and state or municipal bonds. The resultant amassing of wealth has been attributed to his being a talented, shrewd, but scrupulously honest businessman, whom some considered a financial genius. His accomplishments more likely stem from the low-risk commitment of substantial funds to a burgeoning national economy. In any event, it once was noted by his long-time friend and business partner, Ambrose Rucker, that "Success crowned most of his enterprises, with no known reversal at any time." Ranking among the early shareholders and high-rollers in such capitalistic endeavors, his wealth on paper contrasted with that of southern planters and the labor-intensive estates of Virginia and the South during the antebellum period.

FINANCIAL EMPIRE

Samuel Miller's link with the current events, economic trends, and investment opportunities of the early to mid-nineteenth century was limited exclusively to those newspapers or security quotations that he received via postal delivery along the stagecoach route of the nearby turnpike. Confined to the second floor of his residence for extensive periods, he became absorbed in the close scrutiny of potential investments and the absentee management of his expanding properties. He never was known to seek counsel or financial advice from anyone, and only his good friend Ambrose Rucker had any detailed knowledge of his financial affairs. The latter, who

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visited regularly, performed accounting services by recording entries in Miller's bookkeeping ledgers, based on the notes and papers that Miller had assembled since the last entries.

Prior to the Civil War, Samuel Miller's wealth should have been near its peak. His real estate holdings in the vicinity of Lynchburg (excluding his 1,500-acre farm) included tobacco warehouses in the city's commercial district, and he is known to have owned residential property on Main Street in Richmond. He also owned farms in five other Virginia counties (including two in what is now West Virginia), and residential property in Ohio and Missouri. Investing heavily in state bonds issued by Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, North Carolina, and Virginia, he also held municipal bonds issued by Philadelphia and Lynchburg, and stock in the Bank of Kentucky and two Lynchburg banks.

The full extent of his investments in railroad stocks is difficult to ascertain due to the proliferation of companies that existed during railroad expansion between 1840-1860. He was a major shareholder during development of the Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio Railroad Company (later to become Norfolk & Western) as well as the Orange & Alexandria Railroad (later to become Southern Railroad). These two lines became instrumental in Virginia's economic development. Other railroad investments spanned the Midwest and the Mississippi Valley, to include: Michigan Southern & Northern Indiana RR, Michigan Southern & Western Indiana RR, Michigan Central RR, Chicago & Rock Island RR, Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific RR, Chicago & Northwestern RR, Pacific RR, Detroit, Monroe & Toledo RR, Northern Missouri RR, Memphis & Little Rock RR, Mississippi & Missouri RR, St. Louis & Iron Mountain RR, Cairo & Fulton RR, Virginia & Tennessee RR, and the Richmond & York River RR.

The degree to which Samuel Miller suffered substantial financial losses during the war is incalculable. However, had the war not occurred, the extent to which his investments may have flourished is equally inestimable. There is no question that he was a very wealthy man at the eve of that conflict.

GENEROSITY

As noted in the description of the nominated property (Section 7), Samuel Miller made no ostentatious show of riches, and he certainly was not inclined to engage in those lavish forms of entertainment typical of Virginia's landed gentry during the era. Considered a miser by most of his peers, he was quite frugal in his expenditures but also prone to exhibit true generosity. Two examples best illustrate this point.

Known to be a strong proponent of public education, he once was approached by a solicitor seeking funds for the Biology Department of the University of Virginia. Mr. Miller seized the opportunity to engage his visitor in an enthusiastic dialogue on classical writings, but made neither financial contribution nor verbal commitment at that time. Shortly afterwards, he provided the University a donation of \$100,000, a substantial amount in terms of nineteenth century benevolence, especially for one who had never profited from an education there or at any other higher academic institution.

Having made a loan to his good friend (and neighbor), Dr. John Terrell, Samuel Miller declined to accept repayment in what was then worthless Confederate currency. However, he advised the doctor that his debt could be readily liquidated if he were to charge a "substantial amount on a daily basis" for the medical treatment that Miller currently was paying to restore the health of one of his elderly servants. Keeping this transaction in business terms seemed more important to him than just graciously absolving the doctor of debt.

LIFESTYLE

Because of his reclusive nature, there generally was no public knowledge of Samuel Miller's life until testimony and depositions were recorded during the litigation of his will. His tendency to seek privacy may have stemmed from a variety of personal reasons and psychological factors, ranging from his fatherless and impoverished youth, to his deteriorating health at an early age. He had experienced the seamy side of life and had dealt with

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businessmen who lacked professional ethics, causing him to vow that he would never profit from the misfortune of others. The loss of his brother caused him deep depression, as they had been very close and had made a pact to employ their wealth to benefit the education and advancement of orphaned and destitute youth within Virginia.

Labeled an eccentric misanthrope by contemporaries, he sought no social contact but was very polite and congenial in welcoming those few strangers who visited his home. He was said to keep an excellent cook on the premises, and good coffee always was available, even when it was considered a scarce commodity. His handful of loyal friends visited regularly, especially Mr. Rucker and Dr. Terrell. In maintaining the farm, he employed an overseer, and he owned as many as seventeen slaves who attended to domestic housekeeping and nursing duties as well as the general farming operations. Some had been emancipated by him before the war, and others remained as hired employees during the war's aftermath. Particularly faithful servants, such as his nurse, became beneficiaries in his will.

While he never married, Samuel Miller had a long-term romantic relationship with a kept, caucasian mistress known as Mary Davidson. She bore him five sons. In providing for the welfare of his absentee family, however, he made no special provisions for the education of these children nor for their assimilation into society. In short, he did not view anyone as capable of inheriting, managing, and disposing of his wealth in accordance with his wishes.

There are occasional contradictions among source materials. Said to be well-read, Miller had a library valued at his death at a paltry \$25. Doubt exists as to whether he actually profited from the war, but it generally is concluded that his losses far exceeded any gains. However, there can be no question regarding his parsimonious lifestyle and his general unwillingness to expend funds on anything except bare essentials. The inventory of household effects appraised after his death bear mute testimony. All articles, including furnishings, kitchenware, farming implements, wagons, horses, cows, and oxen had a total value of \$1,202.50.

No information has been uncovered that details or diagnoses the nature of Samuel Miller's long-term illness. However, when he went into self-imposed isolation in 1829, he was described as "dyspeptic and nervous". Whether this chronic indigestion affliction had any medical basis or whether it was psychosomatic, it dominated his life. There is no evidence that he ever suffered a stroke or other paralytic condition, but his very inactivity doubtless contributed to progressive weakness. Tall and slender in stature, with a dignified bearing, Samuel Miller was said to appear very distinguished, in spite of his health. His imposing portrait certainly corroborates this description.

WAR

By the latter stages of the conflict, Lynchburg had become a major logistic center and transportation hub, supporting Lee's defense of Richmond. It was during the siege of the city by a Union expedition under Major General David Hunter in June 1864 that Miller took precautions to ensure that his diminishing financial legacy would not be subjected to military plunder. Gold coins and important financial certificates were buried on the property and concealed beneath the main staircase of the house. Informed by local citizens of his wealth, Union troops ransacked the premises and confronted its owner in search of the whereabouts of his riches. It is said that Miller, bedridden in his upstairs chamber (and then almost seventy-two years of age), refused to disclose his hiding places and challenged these intruders to shoot him, declaring that he had but little time to live anyway. According to one account, he was not intimidated when a musket round was discharged into the ceiling above his head. Only a few hours earlier, elements of Brigadier General William Averell's 2d Cavalry Division and Brigadier General George Crook's 2d Infantry Division, advancing eastward toward Lynchburg, had a heavy skirmish on Miller's property, engaging a cavalry brigade of Brigadier General John McCausland, CSA. This had occurred on June 16, causing McCausland's withdrawal to more defensible high ground at the nearby ruins of the old Quaker Meeting House. Shortly afterwards, General Hunter and his staff would occupy Sandusky, the home of Major Hutter. The latter two historic landmarks are approximately one and one-half miles

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northeast of the nominated property. An abrupt westward withdrawal by Union forces only twenty-four hours later was uneventful in terms of further damage to Miller's property.

Having inventoried the losses resulting from the pillaging of his home, Samuel Miller placed a public notice in the *Lynchburg Virginian* on July 18, 1864, detailing his ordeal of June 17 and listing (by serial numbers) several securities which had been stolen, lest they be considered negotiable. By his account, about four-hundred Union soldiers had assembled near the house. A group assigned to search for items of value proceeded to interrogate him, force all of the locks, mutilate furniture, scatter his papers, and remove all domestic foodstuffs as well as livestock fodder, leaving the place in shambles. By another account, even his gold dentures were stolen from his night stand. Despite the extent of looting, his most important financial papers had been buried in waterproof cylinders throughout the property. Some would not be recovered until after his death several years later.

THE WILL

Samuel Miller had the foresight to realize that his wealth likely would be a source of contention after his death, and he recognized the necessity for clear, specific plans for the disposition of his estate. Accordingly, he personally drafted his own twenty-five-point will on April 1, 1859, outlining in detail the manner in which he desired to dispense his funds to offspring, distant relatives, loyal friends, faithful servants, the City of Lynchburg, and Campbell County. More significantly, he prescribed the specific conditions attendant to the establishment and financial support of the Lynchburg Female Orphan Asylum as well as a similar institution for boys in Albemarle County. At the age of seventy-six, Samuel Miller died at home on Saturday morning, March 27, 1869. His total estate was appraised at \$1,250,150.92, doubtless much less than when he had composed the will almost exactly ten years earlier.

The provisions of the will bestowed various stocks, bonds and parcels of land upon Mary Davidson and each of their five sons (the children being infants when the will was written). As for his only maternal relative, a first cousin (not a nephew, as in one account), Jesse Miller, was bequeathed the farm where he lived in Harrison County (now West Virginia). Jesse once had been employed by Samuel Miller as overseer of the nominated property. Having allocated various sums to assorted persons, the fifteenth clause of the will furnished the Lynchburg Female Orphan Asylum a trust of \$151,500 and forty-six acres of land for a building site. At this time, the institution only existed on paper, according to an 1849 act by the Virginia General Assembly. The twenty-fifth and final clause established "The Board of the Literary Fund," a corporation entrusted to manage the residuum (and bulk) of the estate. His intended purpose was the founding of an orphanage and industrial school for boys in Albemarle County, stipulating that if this plan was blocked by the Virginia legislature, the trust would revert to his sons. The provisions of the twenty-fifth clause were contested by attorneys representing his children, and a separate suit was filed by Jesse Miller, the latter claiming to be sole heir and next of kin by law. While each child (and his cousin) eventually were awarded nominal sums by the court, the basic provisions as written by Samuel Miller were upheld. Litigation was not concluded completely until 1876, seven years after his death.

PAYING TRIBUTE

Considering the philanthropy of Samuel Miller, those whom he selected and entrusted to bring his visions to fruition felt obligated to honor his memory in some fashion. Accordingly, the Board of Supervisors for the Lynchburg Female Orphan Asylum deemed it appropriate to commission a portrait of this most generous benefactor. In the absence of any photographic likeness, the artist (Mr. Flavius J. Fisher) took facial measurements of the deceased and rendered a portrait under the supervision of Dr. Terrell, who suggested changes. Yet the true measure of his artistic accuracy rested with former servants, who upon its unveiling, proclaimed it to be a perfect visage of the elderly Mr. Miller. This enormous full-length painting now is the property of the Miller Home of Lynchburg for Girls, which also is the custodian of Miller's grandfather clock, a marble monogrammed mantelpiece from his home, and his small laptop writing desk.

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As for his remains, Samuel Miller traveled more extensively in death than during the last forty years of his lifetime. Originally buried on his farm (the nominated property), he later was interred on the property of the newly founded Lynchburg Female Orphan Asylum (then located on Memorial Avenue in Lynchburg), which was in accordance with a wish that he had expressed just prior to his death. The Board of Supervisors that he had appointed ensured that a suitable memorial marker was erected, consisting of an imposing twenty-five-foot-tall granite spire that proclaimed his role as founder of the institution where his body rested. Many years later, a sale of portions of the institution's land necessitated that his remains and accompanying marker be reinterred on the property. A few years thereafter, when more property was sold, he was reinterred once more at the city's Spring Hill Cemetery. This final resting place is directly adjacent to the grave of his brother John.

LEGACY

By far his most significant and enduring legacies, the Miller Home of Lynchburg for Girls and the Miller School of Albemarle are still partially supported by Samuel Miller's endowments. Both are nonprofit institutions. Income from the Miller Home trust (\$2,200,000) defrays part of the operating budget, and the facility boards as many as sixteen girls, ranging in age from three to eighteen. The Miller School, with a \$3,100,000 trust stemming from the original endowment, is a military-oriented boarding school for boys that also has a coeducational program for day students. Its student body is one-hundred and nineteen, and the education programs range from grades five through twelve. Income from the trust yields an annual income of \$215,000, which is used to subsidize tuition fees. Until 1950, the endowment defrayed all costs for board and tuition.

Samuel Miller's gift of \$100,000 to the University of Virginia also remains in trust and today supports the Miller Professor of Biology and associated research. Moreover, his gifts of both property and funds to the City of Lynchburg left a public park that still bears his name as well as a water reservoir (which no longer exists). To meet operating expenses in the mid-twentieth century, large tracts of real estate left by his endowment were sold by the Miller Home of Lynchburg to the City of Lynchburg (for construction of the present E.C. Glass High School) and to a private developer (for building Lynchburg's first shopping center, Pittman Plaza). It seems somewhat fitting that all source documents listed in Section 9 (Major Bibliographical References), less Campbell County records, are found in Lynchburg's new Jones Memorial Library, which rests today on Miller's former property and only a hundred yards from where the original Lynchburg Female Orphan Asylum and his gravesite were located.

Two-hundred years after his birth*, Samuel Miller remained as much an enigma as he was during his lifetime. Except for a handful of local historians who have recognized the extent of his philanthropy, he largely was relegated to obscurity, even in the environs of the communities which benefited the most from his legacy. However, among nineteenth century residents of central Virginia, there were precious few who left a social mark such as his. He was a very private citizen who kept a low profile and set a rigid agenda, from which he did not deviate. Concerned that his plans would not be fulfilled if he did not prescribe all details for the disposition of his estate, he did not entrust anyone to pursue his goals with the same intensity of purpose.

Significantly, he was a chief investor in the nation's economic development, but more importantly, he pioneered a new order of philanthropy and left endowments which to this day support the educational and social causes in which he took interest. The nominated property is where he quietly accrued a fortune and pursued his visions in relative solitude for forty years.

**In June 1992, the City of Lynchburg, in cooperation with the Miller Home of Lynchburg for Girls, the Miller School of Albemarle, and the University of Virginia, commemorated the bicentennial of Samuel Miller's birth.*

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MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Campbell County Virginia Deed Book 15:

a. Page 114: Conveyance of 430.5 acres from James Martin (Trustee for heirs of Thomas Jones) to Samuel Garland, June 8, 1825.

b. Page 348: Conveyance of 430.5 acres from Samuel Garland to Samuel Miller, December 23, 1825.

2. List of Taxable Property within the District of Allan L. Wyllie, Commissioner of the Revenue in the County of Campbell for the Year 1845.

3. List of the Land Tax within the District of William Organ, Commissioner of the Revenue in the County of Campbell for the Year 1847.

4. Last Will and Testament of Samuel Miller, dated April 1, 1859. Campbell County Will Book 21, pages 442-449.

5. Newspaper, *The Lynchburg Virginian*; Monday, July 18, 1864, page 1, column 5. Public Notice by Samuel Miller.

6. Court of Appeals of Virginia, *Miller's Executor v. The Board of the Literary Fund and Ro. W. Davidson & Co., v. Miller's Executor*. This bound volume (619 pages), generally known as The Petition and Record of Will of Samuel Miller, came from the private library of Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early, CSA, who commanded Confederate forces during the defense of Lynchburg in June 1864. General Early later served as a member of the court and posed questions during the lengthy will litigation. This detailed record of testimony and depositions by friends and relatives of Samuel Miller now is held by Jones Memorial Library, Lynchburg, Virginia, and must rank as the single most informative source document available on his lifestyle, personal relationships, and financial assets.

7. *Lynchburg and Its People*; W. Asbury Christian, 1900, J.P. Bell Company, Printers. Lynchburg, Virginia.

8. *Campbell Chronicles and Family Sketches, 1782-1926*; R.H. Early, 1927, J.P. Bell Company, Printers. Lynchburg, Virginia.

9. *Lynchburg and Its Neighbors*; Rosa Faulkner Yancey, 1935, J.W. Fergusson & Sons, Publishers. Richmond, Virginia.

10. *The Saga of a City, Lynchburg Virginia, 1786-1936*; Lynchburg Sesquicentennial Association, Inc., 1936. Manufactured (sic) in Lynchburg.

11. *A Brief History of Miller Home, Lynchburg Female Orphan Asylum, Lynchburg, Virginia*; Samuel H. Williams, 1964, J.P. Bell Company, Printers. Lynchburg, Virginia.

12. *Lynchburg, "The Most Interesting Spot"*; Dorothy T. Potter and Clifton W. Potter, Jr., 1976, Progress Publishing Corporation. Lynchburg, Virginia.

13. *Lynchburg, An Architectural History*; S. Allen Chambers, Jr., 1981, University Press of Virginia. Charlottesville, Virginia.

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14. *The Virginia Landmarks Register, 3d Ed.*; edited by Calder Loth, 1986, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

15. Magazine Article, *The Battle of Lynchburg, June 17-18, 1864*; E. Alvin Gerhardt Jr., Lynchburg Historical Society and Museum Magazine, Volume VIII, No. 3. Date and publisher unknown.

NOTE: All deeds, property tax, and land tax records, as well as the will of Samuel Miller (Items 1-4 above) are on file at the Campbell County Courthouse, Rustburg, VA 24588, phone (804) 847-0961. Remaining source materials are available at Lynchburg's Public Library (and its Jones Memorial Library Research Annex), 2315 Memorial Avenue, Lynchburg, VA 24501, phone (804) 847-1565.

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MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

SUMMARY

This property, formerly in Campbell County, now is located in the south-southwest portion of Lynchburg, having been incorporated within the city limits in 1976. It is about five-hundred yards west-northwest of U.S. Route 460 (Timberlake Road), historically known as the Lynchburg-Salem Turnpike. This road was the overland stagecoach link with regions west of Lynchburg in the early nineteenth century, and it served as the eastward approach route for Union forces commanded by Major General David Hunter during the siege of Lynchburg in June 1864. Samuel Miller's original landholdings in this area (about 1,500 acres) had dwindled to 231.5 acres when purchased by Mr. & Mrs. W. N. Nelson II in 1951. Much of the property was then a peach orchard known as Richland Farms, until 1955 when the Nelsons began to subdivide it. By the early 1960s, all residential building lots were sold. When Richland Hills Subdivision finally was completed, only 3.86 acres remained at the site of Samuel Miller's former residence. That is the condition today, as portrayed on the appended survey plat entitled "Part of Parcel A". While the street address is Nelson Drive, the property also adjoins Peachtree Road. An interconnecting driveway permits entry/exit via either street.

ADDENDA

- : Survey Plat of Richland Hills Subdivision Source: Lynchburg Board of Historic & Architectural Review
 - : Plat of Survey depicting Part of Parcel A, Section 4, Richland Hills, Brookville District, Campbell County, VA, Jan 26, 1963. Source: This is the most recent survey of the nominated property and accompanied the deed of purchase by Mr. & Mrs. Hollis L. Rudacille, Feb 27, 1963.
 - : Property sketch, depicting relative location of main house, dependencies and driveway
 - : USGS Topographic Map, City Farm Quadrangle (AMS Series V834, Sheet 5158 I SW), Scale 1:24,000, 1963, with photo revision to 1985
- Note: UTM references were determined from this sheet. See upper part of northwest quadrant.

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MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
SURVEY PLAT OF RICHLAND HILLS SUBDIVISION

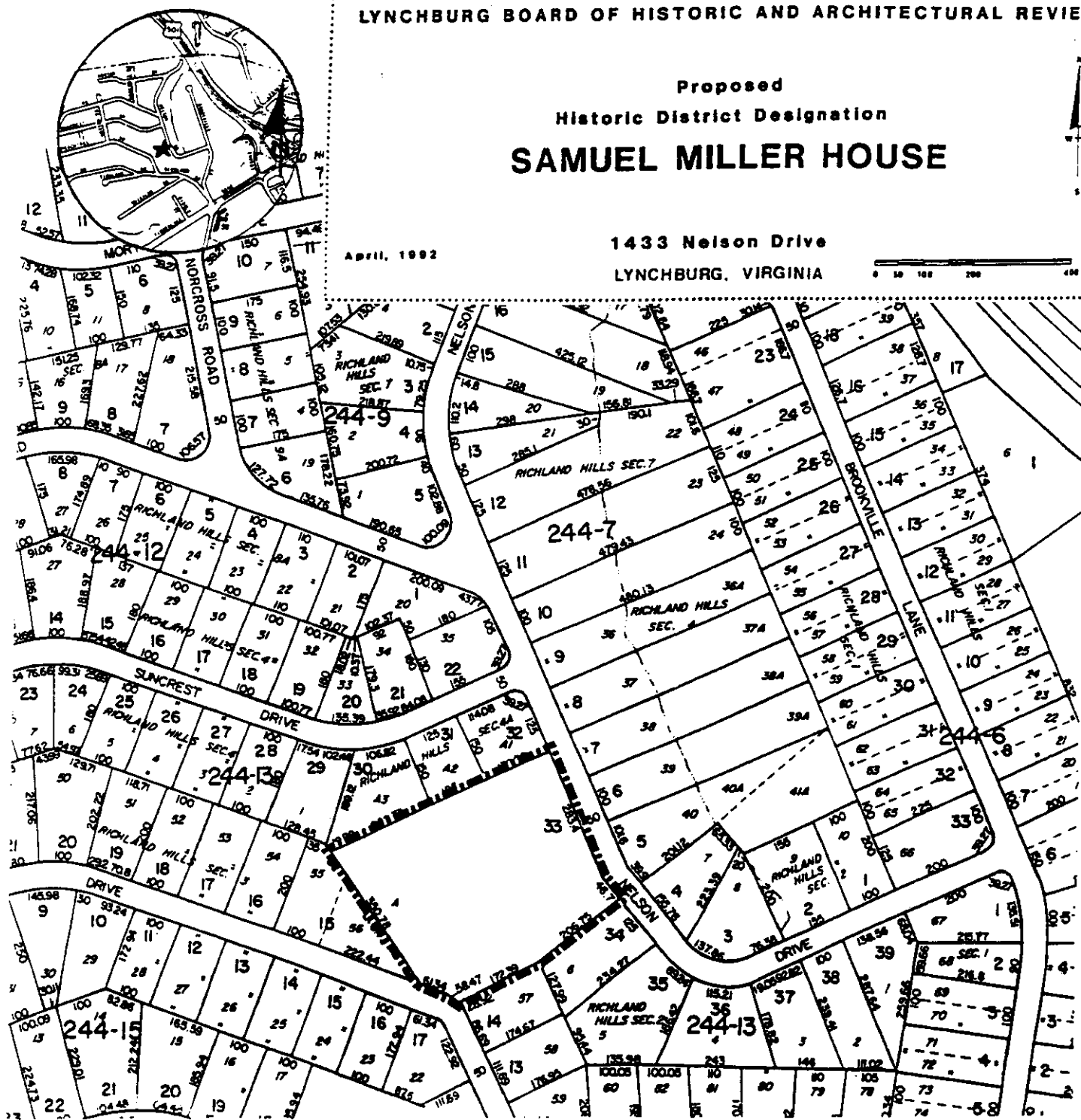
LYNCHBURG BOARD OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

Proposed
Historic District Designation
SAMUEL MILLER HOUSE

1433 Nelson Drive
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

April, 1992

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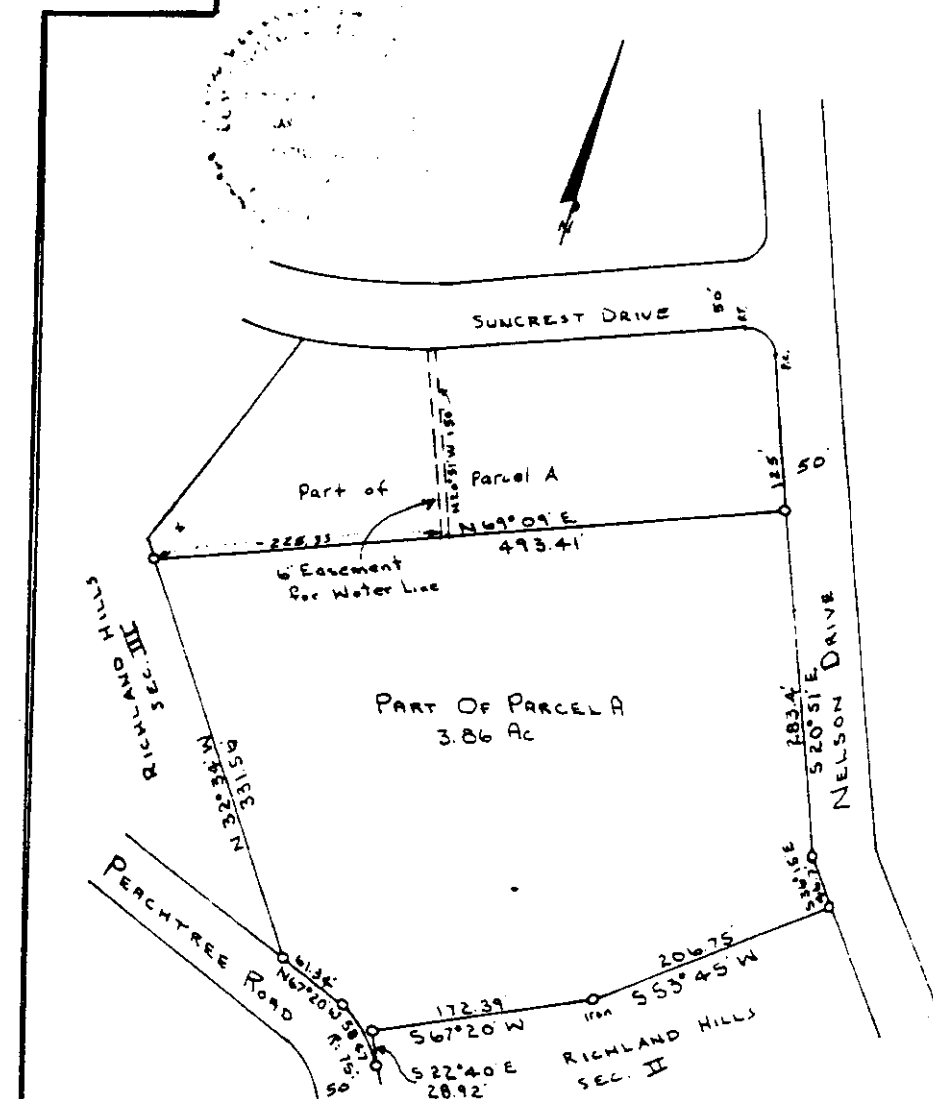
Section number 10 Page 16

MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
SURVEY PLAT, PART OF PARCEL A

ERSKINE W. PROFFITT
CERTIFIED LAND SURVEYOR

LICENSE NUMBER 894

253



PLAT OF SURVEY SHOWING PART OF PARCEL A

SECTION 4

RICHLAND HILLS

BROOKVILLE DISTRICT

CAMPBELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA

APPROVED:

Samuel A. Miller 7/26/63
Agent for the Board of Supervisors of Campbell County, Virginia.

SCALE - 1" = 100'

DATE - JANUARY 26, 1963

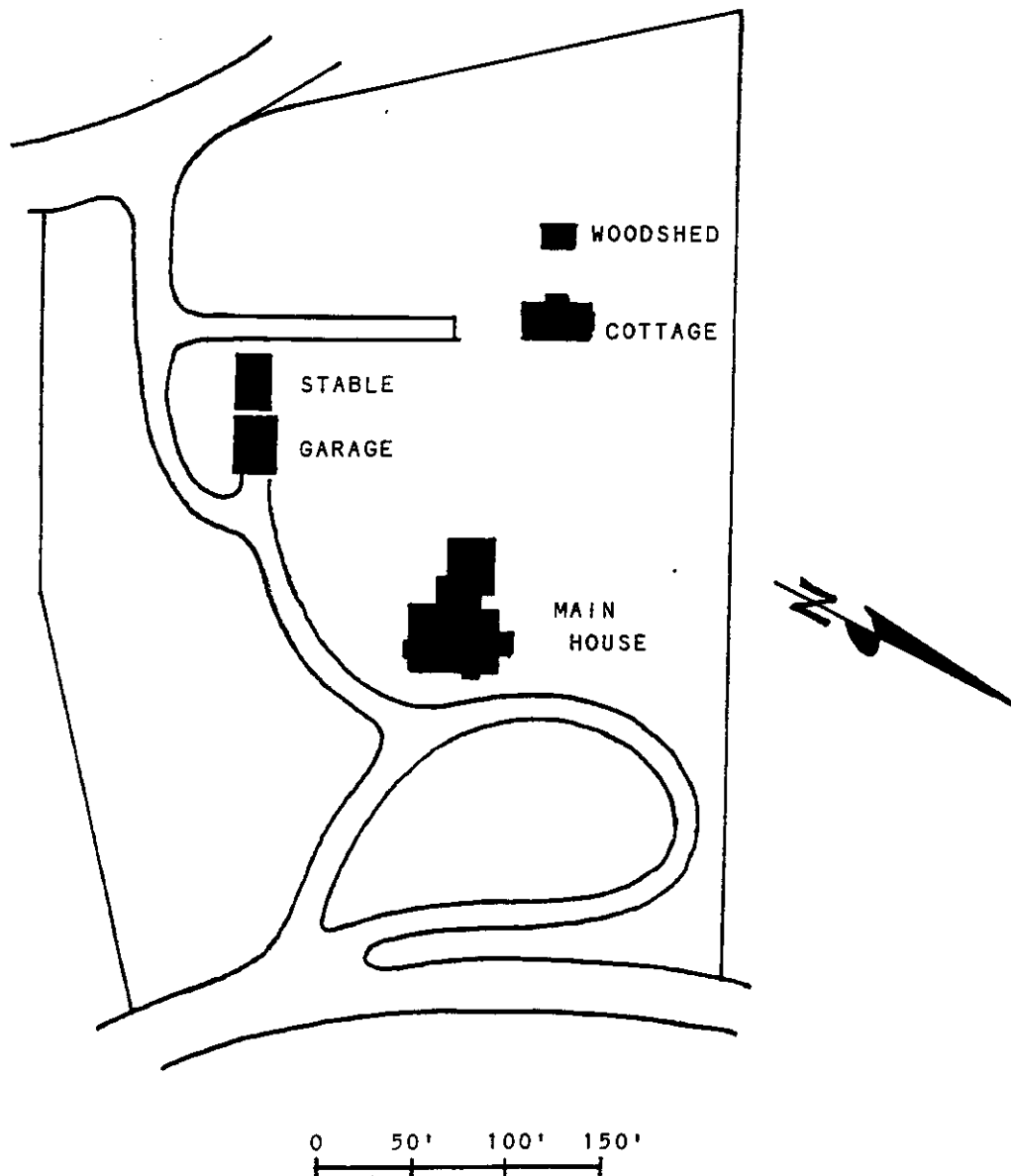
Erskine W. Proffitt C.L.S.

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MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
PROPERTY SKETCH

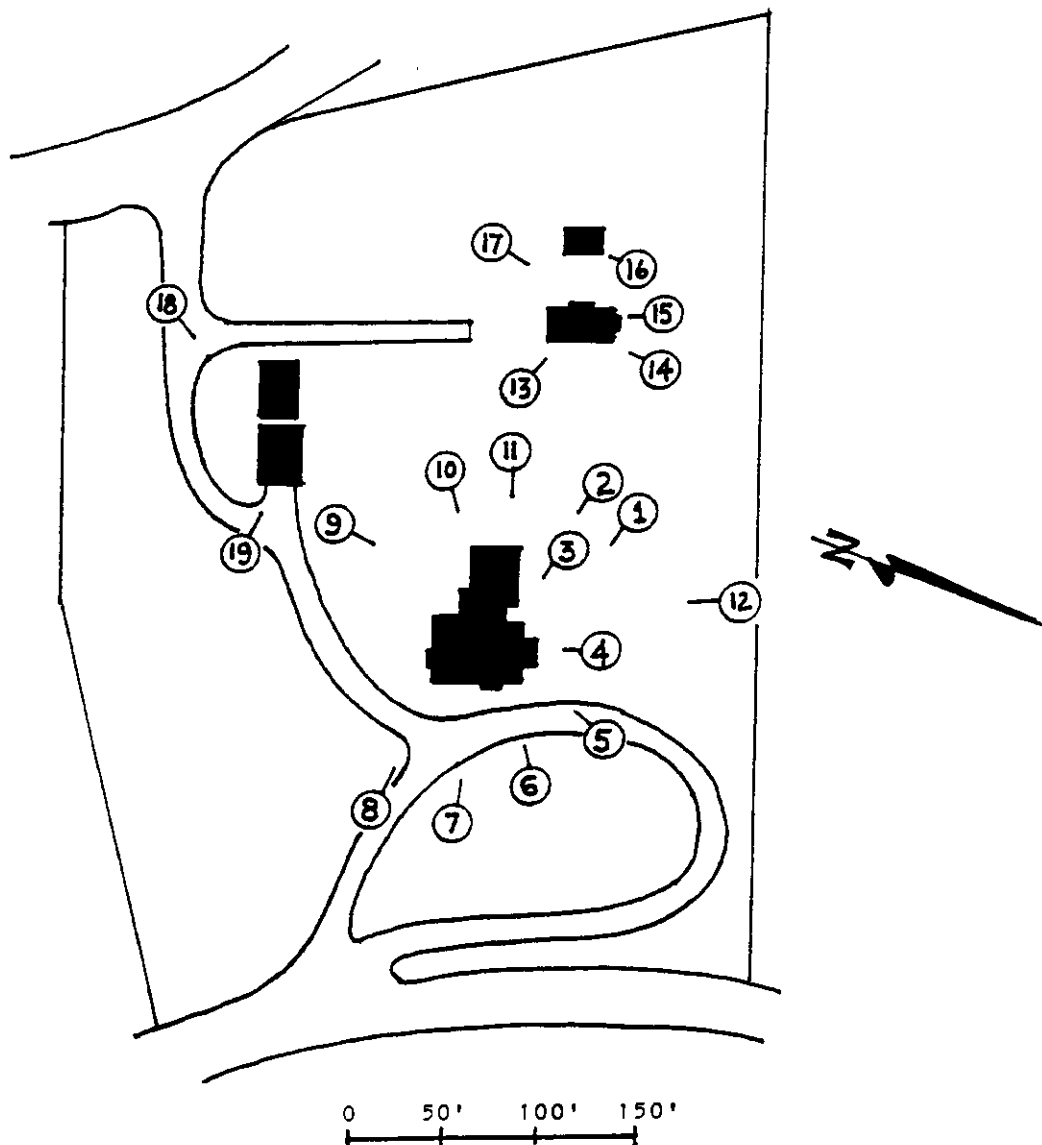


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EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH INDEX

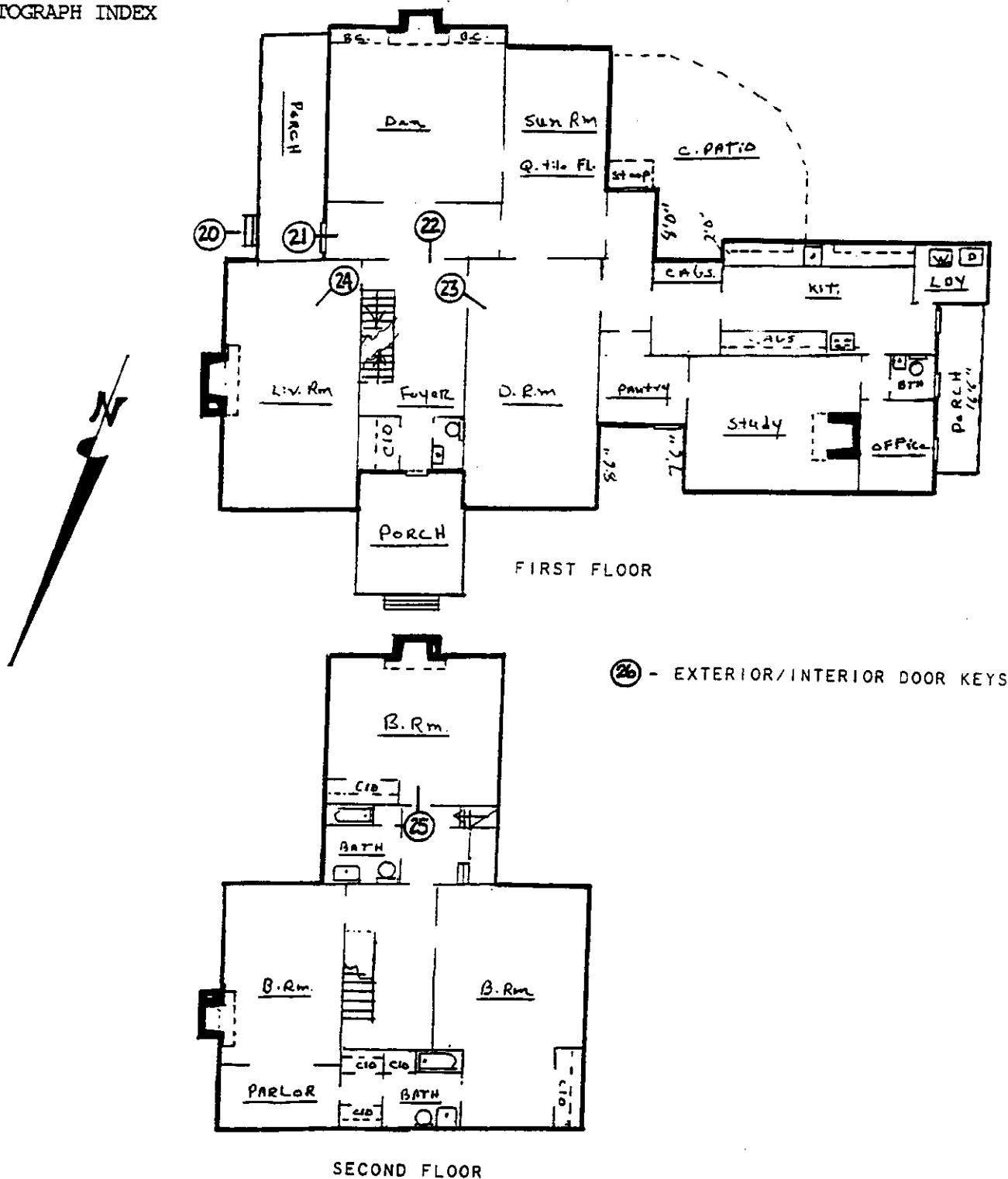


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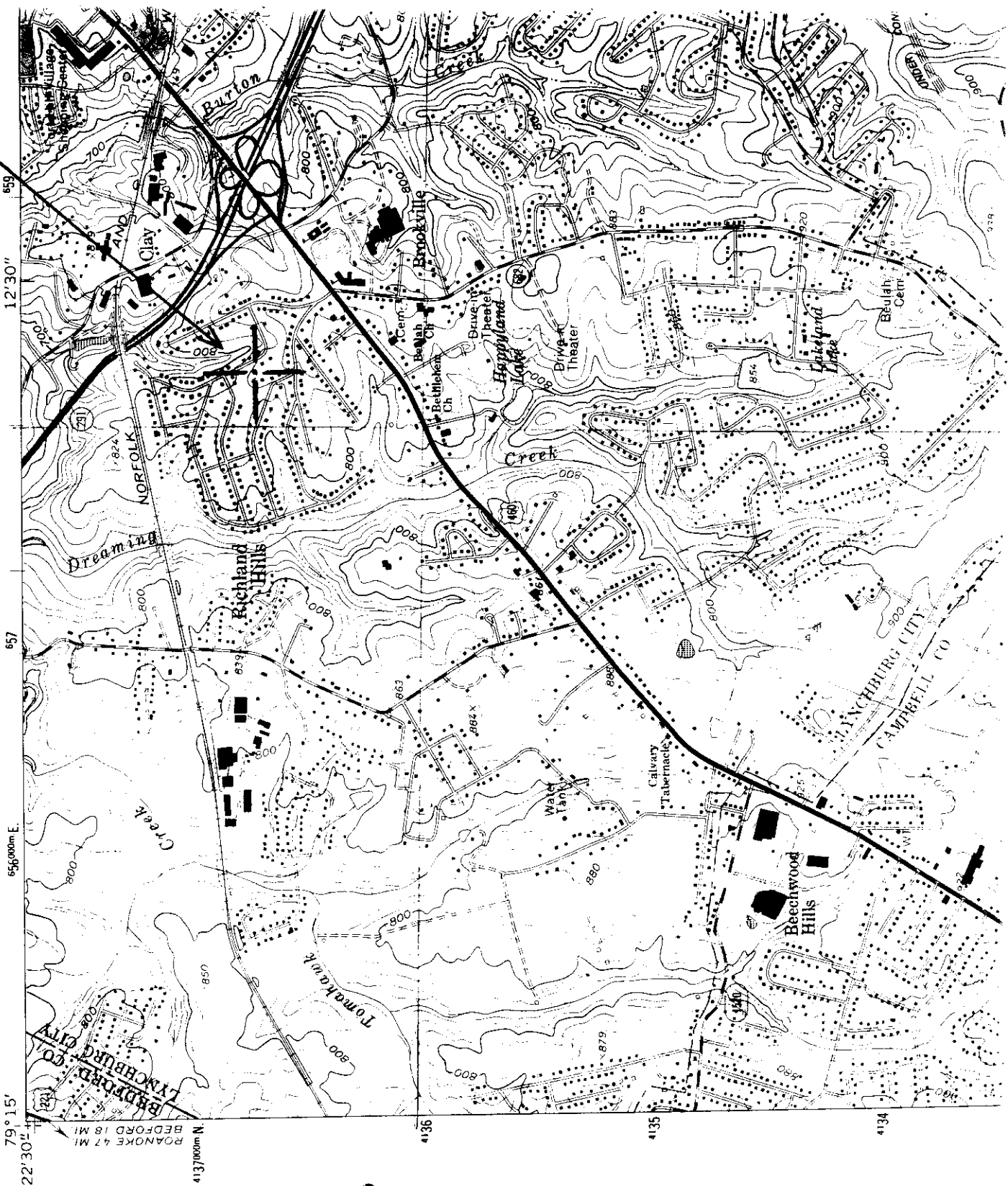
MILLER, Samuel, House; Lynchburg, Virginia
INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPH INDEX



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GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



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MILLER, SAMUEL, HOUSE; LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA
UTM REF: ZONE 17
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(BOONSBORO)